

VZCZCXRO8283
RR RUEHGR
DE RUEHWN #0786/01 3381939
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 041938Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0082
INFO EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 BRIDGETOWN 000786

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
STATE FOR WHA/CAR AND INL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [XL](#)

SUBJECT: International Efforts Keep Drug Trafficking at Bay in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, but Activity Expected to Rise: Fall 2009 NAS Update

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) A consistent presence of counter-drug assets from the international community throughout the summer had a noticeable impact on suppressing trafficking activity in the Eastern Caribbean. Most countries in the region continue to lack financial and human resources to adequately address the challenges associated with drug trafficking, and look forward to greater cooperation and tangible assistance through the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI). Local law enforcement agencies in some countries have increased emphasis on enforcement of asset forfeiture laws, and this increased focus has met with moderate success. Embassy Bridgetown has staffed the NAS position through the Professional Associates Program and the new officer began a one-year appointment in October. The Embassy continues to look forward to receiving an NSDD-38 request from INL to fill the NAS position in the ongoing summer 2010 bidding cycle as recommended by the February, 2010 OIG inspection. End Summary.

RECENT TRENDS

¶2. (SBU) Between July and October, 2009, Venezuelan traffickers had their activities disrupted by the presence of maritime law enforcement activity in the Eastern Caribbean region. Beginning with DEA Barbados Operation Flying Fish in July, followed by JIATF South Operations Caribe Royale (French) and Caribe Venture (Dutch), there has been a consistent presence of international maritime counter drug assets in the region. Intelligence indicates that, although seizures remain low (due to Venezuelan tactics of weighting and jettisoning contraband to eliminate evidence), these operations have had a significant disruptive and deterrent effect on the usual unfettered transit of cocaine through the region.

¶3. (SBU) Intelligence indicates that cocaine stocks on the transshipment islands of the Eastern Caribbean are very low at the moment and, as a result, the wholesale price of cocaine on some islands such as Barbados has nearly doubled to approximately 9,000-11,000 USD per kilogram. Recent intelligence indicates that

activity is expected to increase significantly as the law enforcement surge operations wind down, and several drug trafficking organizations have recently sent smaller test loads through from Venezuela successfully. Additional intelligence indicates that some Venezuelan suppliers are also offering small heroin loads to their cocaine customers in St. Lucia and Dominica to sample.

¶4. (SBU) The following is a snapshot of recent narcotic enforcement/seizures in the region:

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

The DEA Barbados Country Office (BCO) team is working with the Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda (RPFAB) and the FBI regarding extradition of a drug trafficker from Antigua to Barbados.

BARBADOS

BRIDGETOWN 00000786 002 OF 004

On September 13, 2009, a French Navy patrol boat intercepted a vessel in international waters approximately 17 miles north of Barbados to conduct a boarding inspection. The French Navy seized approximately 40 kilograms of marijuana from the vessel and arrested the three crew members. The DEA Barbados Country Office team shared intelligence that the marijuana was destined for a drug trafficker in Barbados. The members were transported to the French Department of Martinique for prosecution.

A female courier for a drug trafficking organization was arrested on September 19, 2009, upon arrival in the United Kingdom, in connection with the seizure of approximately 2.5 kilograms of cocaine. The DEA Barbados Country Office team received information that the female was traveling to the UK and identified several subjects at Grantley International Airport in Barbados who are believed to be part of the courier ring.

DOMINICA

On September 16, 2009, the Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force Drug Squad, Joint Intelligence Branch and the Financial Intelligence Unit executed a search warrant and seized approximately 2 kilograms of processed marijuana, several marijuana plants, and currency valued at 4,000 ECD (1481 USD) and 1,000 EUROS (1,500 USD). Five people were arrested in connection with this drug seizure.

ST. LUCIA

The Royal St. Lucia Police Force, on September 18, 2009, arrested two St. Lucians and two Venezuelans associated with the seizure of approximately 25 kilograms of cocaine concealed in a fuel container. The DEA Barbados Country Office received and shared information relating to the St. Lucia organization that was expecting a cocaine shipment from Venezuela. The four individuals were traveling in a minivan from the area of a suspected beach off-load location.

On October 8, 2009, the St. Lucia Customs Department seized approximately 400 ECD (148 USD) and 10,000 EUROS (15,000 USD) from a female courier as she attempted to board a flight from St. Lucia to Port of Spain, Trinidad. The currency was seized after the BCO received information that the female was traveling to Trinidad to deliver the funds to Venezuelan cocaine suppliers for a pending shipment of cocaine.

ST. VINCENT

On October 15, 2009, the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force (RSVPF) seized 8,011 ECD from a money launderer in St. Vincent after BCO received information that the subject was going to receive a wire transfer of funds from New York for the head of a drug trafficking organization in St. Vincent.

ASSISTANCE TO REGIONAL PARTNERS

BRIDGETOWN 00000786 003 OF 004

15. (SBU) The following is a description of regional assistance provided in September and October, 2009:

ST. LUCIA

In October, 2009, the USG, through the United States Southern Command, announced it will spend 634,800 USD to demolish damaged piers in Castries and Vieux Fort and rebuild them. The piers are critical to the effective counter-drug operations of the Royal St. Lucia Police Force's Marine Unit and by extension the overall counter-narcotics efforts in the Eastern Caribbean. This project is expected to be completed in October 2010.

DOMINICA

The Dominica Financial Investigations Unit (FIU) last year moved into new office space located on the upper level of a building in the heart of the capital city, Roseau. The entrance to the FIU, near a stairwell at the side of the building, presented a risk of persons possibly entering the building undetected. NAS Bridgetown funded a security access system allowing employees of the FIU to see who is entering the building and grant access as necessary. The Security Access System was installed October 27, 2009 at a cost of 1,362 USD.

ST. VINCENT

St. Vincent is known as the biggest producer of marijuana in the Eastern Caribbean. Drug units have cited the lack of physical resources necessary to effectively reduce drug trafficking. NAS Bridgetown, in an attempt to assist the St. Vincent drug squad, purchased and delivered in October 2009, a 4-wheel drive,

double-cab pickup truck. This vehicle is designed to travel high, steep terrain where marijuana is grown.

REGIONAL

The Bridgetown Group, consisting of representatives from the British High Commission, the British Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA), the Canadian High Commission, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the European Union, the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations, the French Police Attach????, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, and NAS-Bridgetown, met on October 14. Lynne Anne Williams, Executive Director of the Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (CARICOM IMPACS), and Jefferson Clarke, Law Enforcement Advisor for Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) presented their organizations' resources and capabilities. CARICOM IMPACS is involved in a wide variety of counterdrug initiatives. The Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) is an organization of thirty states of the Caribbean Basin, which have agreed to implement common countermeasures to address the problem of criminal money laundering. In the roundtable discussion that followed the presentations, there was consensus among the participants that IMPACS is spread too thin and is ineffective in many ways. CFATF, on the other hand, is capable and effective, but too small to have a major impact on increasing the number of properly conducted financial investigations.

In an effort to maximize use of resources and avoid redundancy, each organization agreed to send the US NAS representative a list of all regional activities to be included in a resource matrix. Many island nations ask multiple organizations for the same resources, and this matrix is intended to ensure that all of the

BRIDGETOWN 00000786 004 OF 004

partner organizations know what the others have committed in order to efficiently distribute scarce resources. The group agreed to meet again on November 18 at which time the resource matrix, CBSI, and other initiatives will be discussed.

Comment

16. (SBU) Law enforcement officials continue to cite a lack of resources as the main reason counterdrug measures are not as vigorous as they could be. In the Bridgetown Group, two representatives claimed there had been little or no progress in 19 years. U.K. and EU officials recognize that many of the drugs produced in Colombia and Venezuela are transited to Europe and North America to satisfy demand there. They understand that they have a duty and responsibility to assist Caribbean nations in their counterdrug activities. However, the resources allocated do not come close to meeting the challenges.

17. (SBU) The fact that more drugs are staying on the island nations is complicating matters and increasing local crime and violence. Corruption is also a problem as local officials find it easier to look the other way, or accept bribes to allow drug trafficking internally and externally to flourish. Organizations are more reluctant now than ever before to commit resources without fully vetting the recipients. Others in the donor community, struggling with their own reduced resources, are turning increasingly to the

USG to play the leadership role in stemming the tide of drugs washing up on the shores of the Eastern Caribbean. Local and international stakeholders hope that the CBSI will be a comprehensive, fully-funded, sustainable strategy that will reverse the dangerous trends in the region. British, Canadian, and EU partners in particular would like to be kept up to speed on CBSI-related initiatives to ensure the best possible donor coordination and best application of their scarce resources.

HARDT